



October 6, 2025

For more than a year, Lakewood’s school board has engaged in a closed-door process to shutter a newly built elementary school. This entire process was premised on stale data and kicked off in isolation, without any strategic plan for the future of the district¹ or much less any clear plan for what happens to the new elementary building once closed. No meaningful effort was made to evaluate any scenarios that involved keeping all schools open, or to assess the value that Lakewood’s nationally unique neighborhood school system provides to the community.

As the issues with this process became more widely known over the past year, the school board attempted to distance itself from the process by telling the public that any of its involvement was “just observing” and “information gathering.” The community has been told that a “community” task force of peers, representing a diverse cross-section of our community, was led by the Superintendent and explored all options openly and independent of school board influence.

After a review of certain public records, it is clear that this narrative was untrue.² It is clear that not only was the school board actively involved in every step of the elementary closure process but that it violated Ohio law on numerous occasions in its efforts to keep its deliberations and the true intent of this process hidden from the public. If that wasn’t bad enough, school board leadership worked with the administration to push a public relations narrative designed to gaslight the community into embracing its malfeasance. In attempt to defend its course of action, much of the media generated by the Lakewood City School District over the past year has painted the public narrative that Lakewood’s schools are in a perpetual decline and that the district needs to shed assets to be good fiscal stewards.

¹ Lakewood’s last strategic plan was published in 2022 and expired this year. It did not identify any enrollment challenges, fiscal challenges, or desire to repurpose any schools. See the 2022 Strategic Plan [available here](#).

² A repository of these records can be [downloaded here](#). The bates numbers referenced in the exhibits to this letter correspond to those records.



Regardless of whether the district votes to close a school or halts this process for further study prior to the school board election in a few weeks, the community needs to understand what really happened here. At a time when communities like Lakewood need to be coming together for many reasons, our top two school board leaders decided to rip our community apart. As it turns out, it was for no reason at all.³

Friends of Lakewood Schools, a nonprofit entity formed in May 2025 to support and advocate for the long-term success of the Lakewood City School District, has collaborated with many community stakeholders over the past five months to gather perspectives and information to help shed light on the elementary closure process and, as a result, school board leadership generally. Significant and concerning information has emerged from this initial information, demonstrating both a repeated pattern of misleading the public and of violating Ohio laws meant to avoid these exact situations. While many more questions remain to be answered – and we believe significant additional issues will be identified based on the limited information gathered to date, and what that information implies about records not yet obtained – we feel it is imperative that the community is able to ascertain some of this information that their school board has intentionally withheld from them.⁴

³ Much can be said about the inappropriateness of conducting this type of myopic review of elementary schools alone without a proper strategic plan in place for the district. But even if one is willing to look at this issue in isolation as the school board has proposed, it turns out their own data completely refutes the underlying theory they have been pushing for the past year. Task force member Zach Robock recently published an excellent analysis of the district's own information in the Lakewood Observer. You can [read that here](#). Further we note that the enrollment data the district presented to the Elementary Facilities Task Force (ETF) at its first meeting in August 2024 was based on data prepared in 2022 and originally used "for insurance purposes" that year. The district had more recent figures, but it decided to use the COVID data anyway, presumably because it better fit the narrative they were trying to spin to the ETF that enrollment was falling precipitously at the elementary level and closing an elementary was the only responsible choice.

⁴ Based on the volume of identifiable but missing records and clear violations of Ohio's sunshine laws identified to date, we believe that any litigation over this matter would result in significant additional items being identified. While approximately 10,000 pages of public records have been provided to date in response to certain requests, we note that approximately half of these records are unresponsive "clutter" added to the response (e.g. providing publicly available state legislative budget documents multiple times that are ~1,000 pages each, including thousands of pages of the exact same post card that was distributed by the district to



We highlight here just a few of the findings that demonstrate how the school board manipulated this process from start to finish to achieve its predetermined outcome and to then pass it off as a “community” decision. Had the school board just come clean with the public at the outset of what is inevitably a difficult discussion in the best-case scenario, we believe that much of the community conflict and reputational damage that the school board has inflicted on itself and our community could have been mitigated. Our hope in publishing this information is that, by shedding light on this otherwise dark period, Lakewood residents will be in a better position to engage with their elected school board leaders and can begin to rebuild a culture of trust and transparency that puts Lakewood on a path to long-term success for our schools and our children.

1. The Elementary Task Force process was constructed and managed contrary to Ohio law.

Records show that the school board was intimately involved in creating the task force,⁵ appointing its members,⁶ and designing the limited elementary school-closure scenarios presented to the task force,⁷ and that the school board actively attended and deliberated on substantive policy issues during closed-door meetings.

We want to acknowledge here that approximately 50 very intelligent and engaged community members spent extensive time reviewing, evaluating and deliberating on the information presented to them by the school board and superintendent throughout a nearly

all households in Lakewood, etc.). At the same time, many relevant and responsive records appear to have been omitted from the requests.

⁵ On numerous occasions in 2024 and 2025 the school board stated the obvious – that they had created the task force – before abruptly shifting the message in mid May 2025 to distance themselves from the task force and label it as a task force of the superintendent. For instance, as late as the school board meeting held on May 5, 2025, Board President Nora Katzenberger stated that “the Superintendent and the Board formed the Task Force.” See [Board YouTube Channel](#) for May 5, 2025 Meeting at 1:42:18.

⁶ See Exhibit A attached hereto for relevant correspondence.

⁷ In an email dated March 14, 2025, Board President Nora Katzenberger stated “...when we asked FutureThink to develop draft scenarios as a starting point for the Task Force, we gave them parameters they needed to follow.”



year-long task force process. We thank these community members for their engagement of their time and perspective in that process. The issues identified with the elementary task force process are exclusively directed at the publicly elected school board members and their top administration, not the teachers, staff, task force members, PTA members, or any other valued community member engaged in this process, all of whom we know care deeply about Lakewood's schools regardless of where they stand on this topic. The records suggest that the school board may have misled these well intentioned and intelligent community members, who no doubt believed that their work was well founded and based on data and information they should be able to trust their school board and administration to provide to them objectively. In fact, the evidence suggests that the process was improperly established and managed by the school board leadership from start to finish.

It is clear from numerous records that the task force was effectively a delegated public body "of" the school board, deliberating on significant issues of public policy entrusted to our elected leaders, and not an advisory committee convened solely by Superintendent Niedzwiecki. This is a significant distinction, because meetings of public bodies are required to be held open to the public and properly noticed under Ohio's Open Meetings Act (referred to herein as "sunshine laws").⁸ The task force meetings, therefore, were subject to the sunshine laws and required to be held open for the public. The task force meetings were closed to the public and there was no notice given to the public of the task force meetings.⁹

Records also clearly demonstrate that the Board's presence, often with more than a quorum, at multiple task force meetings did not constitute mere "information gathering" sessions. Active deliberations in fact happened among a majority of the school board at

⁸ See Ohio Revised Code [Section 121.22](#).

⁹ See Exhibit B attached hereto for relevant correspondence.



task force meetings that were intentionally closed to the public and covered topics of school policy that are of great public importance.¹⁰

The violations of Ohio law evident in just a small sampling of public records prompted Friends of Lakewood Schools to send requests for additional public records that were related to the issues identified in those initial records.¹¹ What became clear from reviewing these initial public records was that: (1) the school board had made extensive efforts to hide their deliberations on the school closure topic from the public, often using improperly held board executive sessions for this purpose; (2) rather than asking these intelligent and engaged community members to conduct an open and objective analysis of options, including evaluation of options that keep all schools open, the task force was constituted to provide a “community” varnish and given data that was stale and information that was intentionally packaged to allow the task force to arrive at only one conclusion; and (3) that the school board kicked off this entire school closure process in a vacuum, without any strategic plan or facilities master planning effort¹² that is customary

¹⁰ At the September 25, 2024 task force meeting, with at least a majority of the Board present, the draft task force report states: “The third meeting of the Elementary Facilities Task Force on September 25, 2024, marked a shift from information gathering to active analysis. This session focused on facilitating in-depth, small-group discussions of the seven initial reconfiguration scenarios that had been presented in August. This meeting was designed to encourage Task Force members to critically examine the implications of each option...” At least a majority of the school board members were present in this meeting.

¹¹ We note that at recent school board meetings, certain board members have bemoaned the fact that many groups have requested public records related to this process. While we understand that this can be a time consuming exercise for limited school staff, we note that the school board also has a leadership role in avoiding these exact situations by adhering to sunshine laws and best practices in board governance. In this case, it is the school board’s efforts to hide their deliberations over a decision that is of great importance to the public that generated numerous requests for records by many different individuals. It should be no surprise that, when the community sensed something was amiss in how this process was proceeding and when multiple task force members were raising alarm bells, that the public would seek to understand what was going on behind the scenes. The best way for the school board to avoid putting unnecessary public records response burden on its staff (as well as avoiding needless legal expenses) is to operate in compliance with law and to engage their constituents in good faith.

¹² Public school boards are required by Ohio law to engage in strategic oversight and planning. See [O.A.C. Rule 3301-35-2](#). Moreover, governance and strategic planning are the two most basic and important functions for the controlling body of any organization. The last strategic plan the district published was in



when a school district makes decisions of this magnitude that will impact the community for several decades.¹³

As a result of the above, Friends of Lakewood Schools was formed as an Ohio nonprofit entity in May 2025 by Lakewood residents in order to support and advocate for the long-term success of the Lakewood City School District. A key function of Friends of Lakewood Schools is to promote and advocate for strategic planning, good governance, community engagement and accountability within the Lakewood Schools and by the Lakewood Board of Education. At the same time, we recognize that the biggest threats to Lakewood’s unique public school system are coming from our state legislature and federal government, which at the moment are actively working to dismantle public schools. This dynamic – of witnessing poor leadership over our precious school resources at the local level, combined with a full-on attack on public schools from state and federal government – convinced our stakeholders that a locally based nonprofit was needed to advocate for Lakewood’s public schools at all levels, to incubate new ideas and develop strategies for supporting Lakewood’s schools over the long term.

2. The school board dictated the final scenarios for the task force to review during closed-door meetings that violated Ohio’s sunshine laws.

2022. It was explicitly stated to be a “three-year strategic plan” and expired this year. The 2022 Strategic Plan made no mention of concerns about enrollment, elementary or otherwise. No mention of fiscal concerns. No mention of a desire to open a centralized preschool. No mention of closing one of the three newly built elementary schools. See the 2022 Strategic Plan [available here](#) (“The Lakewood City Schools in early 2022 embarked on a process to develop a three-year strategic plan that will be the District’s roadmap for the years ahead.”).

¹³ We note that board member Coleen Clark-Sutton did request that the task force initially be tasked with creating a 10-year master plan. See email from Colleen Clark-Sutton to Superintendent Niedzwiecki on September 6, 2024, stating that “Are you and the Board (including me) open to this Task Force recommending a 10-year plan of action, so we don’t have to do this again, if our population continues to decline? I think this can broaden people’s understanding of demographic shifts. Also, it ‘might’ lessen the burden on all of us about the closing of one (1) school, if one (1) school is part of a larger plan.” This request was evidently rejected by her colleagues.



Residents who have been following this process likely believe that the Superintendent and consultants proposed seven (7) school closure scenarios for the task force to evaluate when it started in August 2024. Public records demonstrate, however, that the final scenarios presented to the task force likely were dictated by the school board directly during a closed-door executive session of the school board, which is a violation of Ohio's sunshine laws.

After months of work between the consultant FutureThink and the Superintendent and Treasurer, only five (5) scenarios were planned for presentation to the task force at their first meeting on August 28, 2024. **All of those five scenarios developed by school administration included school closures. None of them included a “redistrict only” scenario or a standalone closure of Lincoln.** These same five scenarios were developed, finalized and summarized with PowerPoint presentations and talking points for months up until about a week prior to the task force kicking off on August 28, 2024.

On August 19, 2024, a few hours prior to a school board meeting that night, Treasurer Kent Zeman responds to FutureThink's final five-scenario proposal by saying “Looks perfect.” To which, FutureThink responds indicating they will prepare a slide show of the executive summary “for tonight's meeting.”¹⁴ The school board meeting that occurred a few hours later on August 19, 2024, contained no public discussion of the task force process let alone specific scenarios for school closures. What did occur just prior to the public board meeting that night was a closed-door executive session that lasted an hour and a half. No notice was provided to allow this executive session to cover school ‘repurposing’ or to review the scenarios to be presented to the task force the following week. Nor could an executive session have been called for this purpose, as holding closed-door meetings on these topics is not permitted by Ohio's sunshine laws.¹⁵

¹⁴ See Exhibit C attached hereto.

¹⁵ Under Ohio's sunshine laws, school boards are only allowed to meet in closed-door executive sessions to discuss a very limited set of sensitive topics. Evaluating scenarios for repurposing an elementary school are not one of those permitted topics and, therefore, any discussion of the scenarios to be presented to the task force would be in violation of Ohio's sunshine laws. See Ohio Revised Code [Section 121.22](#) specifying the



What happened immediately after this closed-door school board meeting was a frantic effort by FutureThink to prepare two additional scenarios: “Scenario 1” for closing Lincoln and a “Scenario 7” for only redistricting.¹⁶ These final two scenarios that came out of the August 19, 2024 board executive session were then slapped together in less than a week, while the other five scenarios had been developed by the administration and FutureThink over the prior several months based on criteria provided by the district.¹⁷

In an email explaining why Lincoln was not included in the five (5) scenarios, FutureThink stated:

“I think the reasons we didn’t include [Lincoln] are that it makes the imbalance of enrollment between schools worse and it doesn’t smooth out the boundaries along the major thoroughfares. Additionally, we talked about Roosevelt and Grant being the #1 and #2 options.”¹⁸

After receiving this summary from FutureThink, Superintendent Niedzwiecki then sends it up to the school board on August 23, 2024, stating that “Lincoln will be added as one of the scenarios.” This was five days prior to the first meeting of the task force while all

limited exceptions that allow a school board to meet in executive session outside of the general mandate for open public meetings.

¹⁶ During a school board meeting on May 5, 2025, board member Colleen Clark-Sutton stated “If I were Queen of Lakewood, my proposal is already dead. The one that I was interested in, that I thought ‘Oh, maybe that would be a good idea’ when we first looked at stuff, that’s not even on the table. There’s been some change and there’s been a lot of information that has been accumulated throughout this entire process.” It is unclear whether Mrs. Clark-Sutton was acknowledging that she was the one who requested that Scenario 7 (Redistrict Only) be added to the task force process during the August 19, 2024 executive session, and therefore that her comments meant that redistricting alone was “no longer on the table,” or if she had proposed another scenario to her board colleagues in executive session that never saw the light of day. Either way, it is clear that extensive deliberations over the various repurposing scenarios occurred during closed-door executive sessions that violated Ohio’s sunshine laws.

¹⁷ It appears that the school board also dictated these original criteria that were used by FutureThink to arrive at its original five (5) recommended scenarios. In an email dated March 14, 2025, Board President Nora Katzenberger stated “...when we asked FutureThink to develop draft scenarios as a starting point for the Task Force, we gave them parameters they needed to follow.”

¹⁸ See Exhibit C attached hereto.



other scenarios (two scenarios for closing Roosevelt and one for closing Grant) had been prepared and evaluated for months.¹⁹

The dialogue surrounding the addition of Scenario 7 (redistrict only) to the task force process suggests that it was an afterthought given very little consideration by the administration, likely proposed only as a way to convince the public that redistricting alone was considered before closing a school. The records show that the Scenario 7 that was developed in less than a week was intentionally designed to “illustrate that keeping all seven buildings as elementary buildings is inefficient.”²⁰

What these records show should be appalling to all Lakewood residents and taxpayers, not just school parents. No good faith effort was ever made to evaluate how keeping Lakewood’s seven neighborhood elementary schools operating could work among other priorities. Both Scenarios 1 (repurpose Lincoln) and Scenario 7 (redistrict only) were added in a haphazard manner at the final hour after an illegal executive session held by the board, where it appears they changed the criteria they had originally given the

¹⁹ We note that, while FutureThink had developed two scenarios for closing Roosevelt based on criteria established by the district, the task force ultimately provided no votes for closing Roosevelt. All of the school closure votes were targeted at Grant and Lincoln, which the Superintendent reiterated to media was still her only focus as of October 1, 2025. It has been brought to our attention that the President of the Lakewood Teacher’s Association (the teacher’s union for Lakewood City School District) is also a teacher at Roosevelt Elementary School. The LTA President has since rolled out full throated public endorsements of the school board and their conduct during this process, while the task force populated with several LTA members produced no votes for closing her school. It has also been brought to our attention that numerous teachers within the district are fearful that they will be retaliated against, potentially leading to a loss of their job, if they voice any questions or concern publicly with the school board or district leadership. We understand that LTA leadership has made it clear to teachers that the union will not support them if they are retaliated against by the district for speaking out publicly against district policy.

²⁰ On August 22, 2024 just six days prior to the first task force meeting, FutureThink reported to Treasurer Zeman to state that they were “still working on keeping all schools open scenario” that came out of the August 19, 2024 executive session of the board. Treasurer Zeman replied by suggesting additional criteria that “would further illustrate that keeping all seven buildings as elementary buildings is inefficient.”



administration and consultants that resulted in the original five scenarios FutureThink had proposed.²¹

3. *The School Board met improperly in executive session to discuss how to handle the results of an updated enrollment study that undercut the entire rationale for the task force.*

Despite hand picking the vast majority of the members and tightly controlling the scenarios and information flow to the task force, several task force members decided to ask some basic questions of the data and limited scenarios they were being presented. This push, both from task force members as well as an increasing volume of questions and concern raised by the public, prompted the district to prepare an updated enrollment study in late 2024.²² This updated study was first prepared by FutureThink on November 7, 2024, then eventually released to the task force three months later on February 19, 2025. President Nora Katzenberger spoke at this task force meeting when the updated study was revealed.²³

The problem with this updated enrollment study was that it undercut much of the district's rationale for even engaging in the elementary closure process. The study showed, as the task force members and community members had suspected, that enrollment wasn't declining, it was stabilizing and even growing at the elementary level over the past

²¹ In an email dated March 14, 2025, Board President Nora Katzenberger stated "...when we asked FutureThink to develop draft scenarios as a starting point for the Task Force, we gave them parameters they needed to follow." The "parameters" that President Katzenberger appears to be referencing here are the same parameters that FutureThink is referring to when they stated that Lincoln was not included for closure because it did not meet the parameters of balancing enrollment and smoothing the district lines along major thoroughfares. These parameters appear to have been changed again when Treasurer Zeman added criteria to show that the "redistrict only" Scenario 7 "would further illustrate that keeping all seven buildings as elementary buildings is inefficient."

²² Task force member Zach Robock has written extensively regarding the gaps in planning during the task force process. His summary of the issues identified in the updated 2025 enrollment study and capacity study are summarized in an article available here: [Task Force Member Speaks Out: "Not a single one of the district's 6 scenarios can be implemented as proposed"](#)

²³ See minutes from the February 19, 2025 task force meeting, [available here](#).



four years since the height of COVID.²⁴ Buildings enrollments were not inequitably balanced, they actually fit nicely within all of the stated criteria the district sought to achieve.²⁵ And minor redistricting efforts could smooth this even further without pain to the community.

Had the school board gone into this process with any sort of real plan and honest intentions – at minimum, asking for legitimate, broad community input at the outset and doing an updated enrollment study rather than relying on stale peak COVID-era data – they would have halted the process before even convening the task force. Ideally, they would have also adopted a strategic plan for the district and a proper master facility plan.

But not this school board. At all opportunities where other publicly elected representatives might have pumped the breaks and reset the dialogue with the community, this school board leadership decided to plow ahead and massage this unhelpful data with public relations spin. Rather than transparently present this information to the community and engage in an honest discussion, talking points were developed to hide the inconvenient truth that the study showed. This was done not only for the general public but also for the task force presentations, which intentionally left out the key takeaway from the study. It wasn't until task force members digested the study, asked questions and demanded that the district update the public summaries with non-misleading information, that we first learned that enrollment was not declining, it had in fact stabilized over the past several years. And the all-consuming data point the school board relies on for charting the district's future – the birth to kindergarten retention rate – was at a 10 year high!²⁶

²⁴ See analysis of enrollment and capacity data, [available here](#).

²⁵ Task force member Zach Robock recently published an excellent analysis of the district's own information in the Lakewood Observer. You can [read that here](#).

²⁶ See analysis of enrollment trends based on the district's data presented to the task force, [available here](#).



Shortly after the truth behind the updated enrollment study emerged, the school board held another executive session on February 25, 2025 to review the situation behind closed doors.²⁷ This meeting was yet another violation of Ohio sunshine laws.

The school board had another perfect opportunity to reset the dialogue at this point. But they chose again to plow ahead. At the next several public meetings, they rolled out their talking points and asked their friends to help reinforce these in public comments. They aggressively deployed insulting and condescending talking points like “change is hard” and “kids are resilient” in attempt to shore up support for a task force process that was increasingly taking on water. Stakeholders raising legitimate questions about their elected leaders’ actions were painted in district media statements as a “small group” of “concerned parents” to imply that these stakeholders were just emotional about their kids’ elementary closing, unable to see the big picture as clearly as the school board.

4. School Board leadership steered the entire task force process from behind the scenes, including in drafting the task force report (to be issued to itself).

It is noteworthy that the school board has tried for the past five months to convince the public that it had no involvement in the task force process, insisting on multiple occasions that it did not even review the task force report.²⁸ School board leadership even disingenuously riled up their friends who populated the task force by convincing them that their “voices were silenced” when the school board was forced to abruptly jettison the

²⁷ See Exhibit D, showing multiple board executive sessions occurred on February 25, 2025 and for the next few board meetings where the enrollment study and capacity figures were reviewed by the school board for hours behind closed doors. None of this deliberation was ever done publicly, as required by Ohio law. It was always held in private.

²⁸ At a school board meeting on August 18, 2025, Vice President Betsy Shaughnessy stated, “I have not read the final task force report, much as I would love to, or received a copy due to the demand letter.” At a school board meeting on May 5, 2025, board member Colleen Clark Sutton stated “We didn’t go to the last two [task force] meetings because they were working on the report. We’re not helping write the report. We are receiving the report.” Such lines were repeated by multiple school board members on numerous occasions throughout the summer of 2025.



entire task force process due to numerous legal violations evident in the task force process.

In reality, text messages show that Superintendent Niedzwiecki sent copies of the final task force report to school board leadership.²⁹ These messages clearly show that not only did the school board populate the task force mostly with their friends and employees, and then participate in most of their formative meetings, but that the school board was also involved in reviewing and commenting on the very report that the Superintendent would be making back to the school board in recommending which school to close.

Rather than coming clean with the community and admitting what had become obvious for months – that the task force was a charade concocted by the school board to provide a “community” veneer to a decision they already made to close an elementary school – the school board chose to roll out a “shoot the messenger” public relations strategy. In the process, they lied to the public and their friends who they convinced to publicly defend their actions and to attack the integrity and intentions of anyone who dared criticize their publicly elected officials for what was clearly a terribly botched (and illegal) process.

5. After abandoning the task force, the district scrambled to find after-the-fact justifications for why it should close a school, including fiscal responsibility and threats from the state budget process.

After being forced to abruptly jettison the entire task force process because it was illegally convened and managed in violation of Ohio’s sunshine laws, the school board spent the summer coming up with new after-the-fact justifications for its haphazard effort to close an elementary school. With the “Lakewood is dying” and perpetual declining enrollment narrative now in substantial question, the state budget and “fiscal

²⁹ See Exhibit E attached hereto.



responsibility” became a very convenient new boogie man upon which to hang this decision.³⁰

Much can be said about how fiscally irresponsible it is to operate a school district of this size without any strategic plan or facilities master plan in place, or how a newly built school building could be selected for decommissioning without any plan or financial analysis for why or what comes next.³¹ But for simplicity, we highlight here the school board’s own determinations of what is financially “material” to the district. And in this light alone, it is clear that the school board’s claims that closing an elementary school in this manner is in fact “immaterial” to the district. So immaterial in fact, if it were one of the numerous financial and accounting issues identified by the school district’s outside auditors, it would never even be mentioned in an audit report.

During the last financial audit for last year in 2024, the school’s auditors reported to the school board that: “During our review [...], we noted that the following funds had total expenditures that exceeded final appropriations [by over \$2.4MM], which is contrary to Ohio Revised Code Section 5705.41(B):”³² The auditor goes on to recommend that “the District exercise due care to ensure total expenditures do not exceed final appropriations.

³⁰ We acknowledge that the threats by the Ohio legislature, and more recently the federal government, to public education are very real. And this years’ state budget yielded many new and egregious efforts to dismantle public education and benefit non-public schools. A large part of the purpose of this nonprofit organization is to incubate solutions and implement strategies to counteract that exact threat. The public relations blitz deployed by the district on this topic, however, only served to mislead the public into believing that these threats constituted an appropriate after-the-fact justification for the district’s improper and haphazard elementary closure process. See [here](#) for more specific examples. This effort is counter to the values school board leadership espouses, and it is important that the public is able to distinguish these things if we are to make any progress in protecting Lakewood’s cherished public schools from these external threats.

³¹ The destruction of community value, educational and formative value to young children, and property values to local residents have been covered extensively in other public commentary. See the Preserve Lakewood Schools [news section](#) for large volumes of public commentary and analysis on these topics.

³² See Exhibit F attached hereto.



This will assist the District in avoiding negative fund balances and also ensure the District is in compliance with Ohio Revised Code Section 5705.41(B).”

The school board’s outside auditor identified over \$2.4MM of funds being overspent versus budget in the last fiscal year alone. The auditor’s letter also identifies “uncorrected misstatements” of over \$1.25MM in the last fiscal year alone, and recommends the district put corrective controls in place to prevent these misstatements in the future. Yet, these items were deemed “immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate” to the district’s financial statements as part of financial statements approved by the school board.

Despite several of these items being flagged by auditors as violations of Ohio law and representing over \$3.5MM in aggregate of budget overruns and misstatements of financials, these items were deemed by the school board to be “immaterial” to the district’s financial picture. At the same time, the school board leadership has spent the past year, untold amounts of consulting and staff dollars, gaslighting the community that destroying the fabric of our neighborhood schools is all a necessary act of “fiscal responsibility” for what is projected to be about \$750,000 in savings per year, less than one percent of the school district’s more than \$85MM annual operating expense load.

In other words, the financial errors and budget overruns which were deemed immaterial by the school board when overseeing the district’s financial performance, represent over 4.5 times the projected savings that the district is projecting as savings from closing an elementary school. And we note that the district’s cost-savings projections are subject to substantial question and lack of supporting information, most notably that the district has provided zero weight to any of the value that walkable, neighborhood schools provide to the community, child development and property values in



the city, or provided any capital or operating budget for what is to happen with the shuttered school building.³³

Despite stating on multiple occasions that the elementary closure process is not about financial concerns, school board members continue to talk up the significance of closing an elementary school on the district's budget. The misleading nature of this public relations effort has somehow convinced many in the community that closing a school will allow the district to avoid a levy in 2026. This couldn't be further from the truth, as a substantial levy likely will be needed in next year, and closing a school will not have a material impact on the dollar amount needed when all appropriate factors are considered.³⁴

6. After abruptly abandoning the entire task force process, the school board rolls out a second even more haphazard process to vote on school closure before the November 4, 2025 school board elections.

When the school board made clear that they had no interest in listening to the outpouring of legitimate community questions and concern raised by their own task force

³³ The projected cost savings figures produced by the district are misleading, particularly when presented as such in isolation, for several reasons. Most importantly, zero financial analysis or projections have been provided for the future use of the school being shuttered. The district has made off-hand references that (if a centralized preschool is the ultimate choice, which is entirely unclear) then it might be run in a cost neutral manner to the district. Zero financial information has been offered to substantiate this claim. More importantly, no financial analysis has been done of the potential capital expenditures that will be required to convert a current elementary into the future preschool / recreational center / other uses that have been contemplated. For example, Grant elementary and Lincoln elementary while similar in size are very different in construction and layout, have very different neighborhood orientations and parking / traffic flow situations. It appears that none of this analysis has ever been conducted, or if it has it has been hidden from public records request attempting to obtain this information. Let alone made public in any manner that would allow the school board to state with any confidence that repurposing a school into "some to-be-defined future use" would in any way save the district money.

³⁴ To be fair to the district, they have never (to our knowledge) publicly claimed that closing a school would avoid the need for a levy in 2026. But nonetheless the public relations messaging has resulted in many in the community believing that to be the case, or at least believing that the levy will be materially smaller because of a school closure decision. As demonstrated above, that public perception appears to be unfounded.



members and hundreds of residents, Friends of Lakewood Schools sent a demand letter to the school board on May 14, 2025. The purpose of a demand letter is to put the receiving party on notice that they have violated the law and to work in good faith to avoid unnecessary litigation. As a nonprofit formed to advocate for the success of Lakewood's public school system, such a lawsuit is the last thing that any community member or advocacy group – and one would hope, the school board – would want to see.

The demand letter essentially asked the school board for two simple things: (1) Don't move forward with closing a school on the half-baked and illegally formed task force process that yielded what appears to have been the pre-determined result dictated by the school board; and (2) Adopt a proper strategic plan, one that sets a clear vision and priorities for the entire district and informs a process like elementary closure with proper planning, prior to making a decision of this magnitude.

Both in the original demand letter and in multiple conversations with the school board's counsel over the summer, Friends of Lakewood Schools sought to meet and discuss how these demands could be met and entirely unnecessary litigation avoided. All of those requests for meetings were denied. The school board implicitly acknowledged that the task force process was illegal by immediately halting all task force work and soon after throwing out the entirety of the prior years' work.

Rather than take the appropriate next step of adopting a strategic plan for the entire district, and take the time to engage with the community objectively, the school board chose to kick off the 2025 school year with a new and even more haphazard process to rush to a school closure vote just before the school board election on November 4th.

It appears that this decision to rush out a second and even quicker process may have been made based on political realities. The school board appears to be under the impression that the community will reward them for having rambled through a decision to close an elementary school. We trust that the community will not easily look past all of the glaring governance breaches that have been uncovered during the past year. These issues



go to the overall heart of school board function and the culture of leadership in our great city's public schools.

Therefore, we think it is important for the community to see some of the dialogue that was uncovered in the public records provided to date. While some of these items may not be legal violations in themselves, they demonstrate a toxic leadership culture within the school board and administration which permeates to issues far beyond school facilities. These candid conversations appear to reflect the school board's feelings toward many of their constituents and their role in charting a vision for the community's future that represents the will of those constituents.

One topic that has frustrated many community members is that the school board refuses to engage openly and transparently with community concerns. School board meetings are highly structured with public comment tightly constrained, allowing no direct feedback or engagement with elected officials, emails to school board members and administration on policy topics receive canned responses, and prepared public relations statements are rolled out that often reframe legitimate questions and concerns into self-serving "spin" and talking points that the district is attempting to drive with the public.

Perhaps the most recent and poignant example of the culture of fear and silence created by school board leadership occurred at the school board meeting on September 2, 2025. When one school board member (Colleen Clark-Sutton) attempted to respond to a question from the public at this meeting, school board president Nora Katzenberger audibly silenced her and cut off the effort.³⁵ To see how other public bodies handle public questions and concerns, all one needs to do is look over at the Lakewood City Council meeting occurring at the same night, in the same town, at the same time. During that

³⁵ See the School Board Meeting video from September 2, 2025 available on the District's [Youtube Channel here](#) starting at 54:38. Board member Colleen Clark-Sutton said "So, I know we're not supposed to talk, but.." To which President Nora Katzenberger immediately jumped in to cut her off saying "Collen, No!" prompting an audible sigh by Clark-Sutton, herself an elected leader tasked to represent her constituents.



meeting, various council members engaged with multiple public commenters on a number of topics, whether they agreed with the commenter or not.

Current school board Vice President, Betsy Shaughnessy, who was President when she voted to close Grant over 15 years ago,³⁶ has shown similar indignation with school parents and concerned residents. In text messages to her school board colleagues, she declared that she was:

“Tired of the focus on parents who can stroll to a school a block away and chat with other parents.”³⁷

Vice President Shaughnessy has been on the school board for over 30 years. Not only did she lead the school board into voting to close Grant elementary originally fifteen years ago, which was ultimately unwound by a subsequent vote of the school board when deciding to rebuild the current Grant building. The process that led to her voting to close Grant fifteen years ago was ensnared in nearly identical accusations of closed-door meetings and deliberations that violated Ohio’s sunshine laws.³⁸

Another school board member, when the school board was drafting a heavily biased community survey that was sent to every household in the district early this year, said to her colleagues:

“I believe the statistic is something like only 15-16% of all Lakewood households have school-aged children in our public schools. Our levy (and other topics) messaging needs to reach beyond the engaged elementary parents [...] Their ability to express their love for their individual elementary school communities can not be a major factor in making our decision.”³⁹

³⁶ See Cleveland.com story “Lakewood School Board Votes to Close Grant Elementary” dated February 18, 2010, [available here](#).

³⁷ See Exhibit G attached hereto.

³⁸ See Lakewood Observer article “School Closing Fiasco” dated February 24, 2010, [available here](#).

³⁹ See Exhibit H attached hereto.



The issues identified with school board leadership throughout the past year go well beyond the elementary closure dialogue. They go to the heart of good governance and the culture of our public schools. School Board President Nora Katzenberger and Vice President Betsy Shaughnessy, while no doubt highly intelligent and well-intended people who have done great service for Lakewood including its schools over the years, have nonetheless created a culture of fear in our teachers, a culture of closed-door decision making, and a culture of gaslighting the public with district communications. This culture has allegedly gone to the level of instigating friends and supporters to intimidate and smear the reputations of people who dare to question their actions as our elected leaders.

This is authoritarian behavior. It is bad for our schools, bad for our kids and bad for our community. Even if a recommendation is made to defer on closing a school at the 11th hour, what we have learned about school board leadership over the past year and the toxic culture they have created within our schools must be addressed.

Over the past year, Lakewood residents have shown they care deeply about their schools, that they are engaged and willing to hold their elected officials accountable when they breach the trust that the community places in them. Now is one of those times. We trust that with the information contained in this letter as well as their own independent evaluation of our school board leadership, Lakewood residents will be able to make an informed decision on how to move forward to ensure the health and vitality of our community, our schools and our children for many years to come.



EXHIBITS

See attached.

Note: The bates numbers used in the following exhibits correspond to the records produced by the Lakewood City School District and are available for [download here](#). For ease of reference, we have assembled screenshots captured from those records in the exhibits below.

Exhibit A

See for example the following items. Many more are contained in the full records file:

1. LKWD_004158 – Email from Superintendent Niedzwiecki to City Councilwoman Cindy Stregbig noting that school board Vice President Betsy Shaughnessy requested her to participate in the task force process.
“Hi Cindy... Betsy asked that I invite you to our task force...”

On Wed, Feb 12, 2025 at 3:25 PM Brent Kallay <brent.kallay@lakewoodcityschools.org> wrote:

The only email with the exact wording of "INVITE - Lakewood Facilities Planning Task Force." is Cindy Stregbig.

The message was "Hi Cindy. I hope you have had a great summer. Betsy asked that I invite you to our task force, which will begin in a few weeks. I hope you can participate. Please fill out the google form if you are interested."

All the other invites were worded like below. I save all my invitations because I have a problem.

2. LKWD_000054 – Text message from board member Colleen Clark-Sutton to Superintendent Niedzwiecki on May 8, 2024: “Hi Maggie, I’d love to chat with out about the upcoming Task Force invitation list and scope of their time commitment before you send this out to people.”
3. Email 3 – From Superintendent Niedzwiecki dated July 11, 2024, noting that she “spoke to Mr. Callahan today and he wanted me to resend the invite for our Facilities Taskforce again. We would really like you to participate if you are available.”

From: [Maggie Niedzwiecki](#)
To: slintern@overdrive.com
Subject: Valued Lakewood Community Member Invitation
Date: Thursday, July 11, 2024 11:41:10 AM

Good morning.

I spoke to Mr. Callahan today and he wanted me to resend the invite for our Facilities Taskforce again. We would really like you to participate if you are available.

I hope your summer is going well.
Maggie

Exhibit B

See LKWD_000022 – Text messages show Colleen Clark-Sutton inquiring with her fellow board members whether the task force meetings are open to the public. Superintendent Niedzwiecki responds that “No, they haven’t been and I do not recommend it. We will not get any work done.”

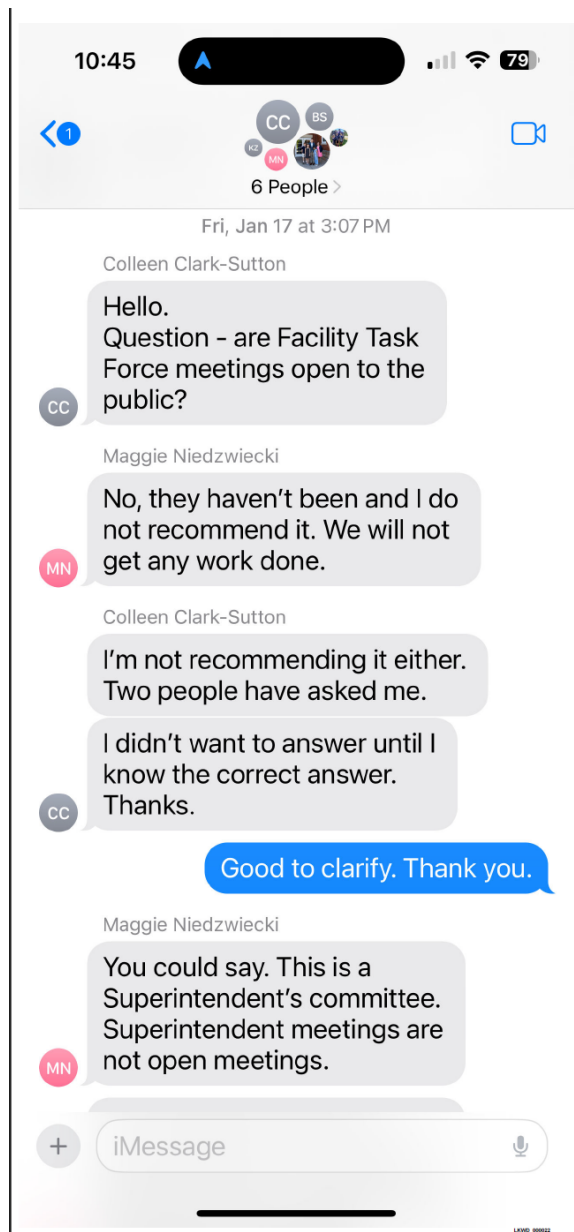


Exhibit C

See bates numbered pages from LKWD_000148 to 000192 showing the dialogue between FutureThink and the administration just prior to the August 19, 2024 executive session of the school board.

From: Kent Zeman <kent.zeman@lakewoodcityschools.org>
Sent time: 2024/08/19 01:49:25 PM
To: Maggie Niedzwiecki <maggie.niedzwiecki@lakewoodcityschools.org>
Subject: Fwd: exec summary
Attachments: execsumm_lakewood_240819_tvh.pdf

See attached.

Looks good to me. Thoughts?

Kent R. Zeman, CFO/Treasurer

Lakewood City School District

13701 Lake Avenue

Lakewood, OH 44107

Phone – (216) 529-4096

Email: kent.zeman@lakewoodcityschools.org

Website: www.lakewoodcityschools.org

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE

This information is intended only for the use of the named addressee(s) and may contain information that is confidential or legally privileged. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any disclosure, copying or distribution of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please immediately notify us by telephone and return all pages to us by mail.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Tracy Healy** <tbealy@futurethinkinc.com>
Date: Mon, Aug 19, 2024 at 12:10 PM
Subject: exec summary
To: Kent Zeman <kent.zeman@lakewoodcityschools.org>

Hi Kent,
Would you mind reviewing the attached and let me know what you think?
Thanks so much,
Tracy



Tracy V. Healy, President
614-264-2638
www.futurethinkinc.com
She/Her

LKWD_000148

From: Tracy Healy <thealy@futurethinkinc.com>
Sent time: 2024/08/22 02:01:38 PM
To: Kent Zeman <kent.zeman@lakewoodcityschools.org>
Cc: Maggie Niedzwiecki <maggie.niedzwiecki@lakewoodcityschools.org>; Rick Stein <rstein@urbandecisiongroup.com>; Tyler Spear <tspear@urbandecisiongroup.com>
Subject: Re: Lincoln

Ok great! Yes, that is the option we are currently working on with all 7 schools. Thanks so much!



FutureThink

Tracy V. Healy, President
614-264-2638
www.futurethinkinc.com
She/Her

On Thu, Aug 22, 2024 at 1:54 PM Kent Zeman <kent.zeman@lakewoodcityschools.org> wrote:

Yes, we would definitely want a minimum operating capacity to exceed 60% (or maybe higher). This would further illustrate keeping all seven buildings as elementary buildings is inefficient.

With keeping all seven schools open, the goal would be to balance the enrollment amongst all buildings, so we would expect capacity to increase at our lower enrollment buildings and decrease at the higher enrollment buildings (with the exception of Grant maintaining the gifted program)

Kent R. Zeman, CFO/Treasurer

Lakewood City School District

13701 Lake Avenue

Lakewood, OH 44107

Phone – (216) 529-4096

Email: kent.zeman@lakewoodcityschools.org

Website: www.lakewoodcityschools.org

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE

This information is intended only for the use of the named addressee(s) and may contain information that is confidential or legally privileged. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any disclosure, copying or distribution of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please immediately notify us by telephone and return all pages to us by mail.

On Thu, Aug 22, 2024 at 11:22 AM Tracy Healy <thealy@futurethinkinc.com> wrote:

Hi Maggie and Kent,

Attached is the map repurposing Lincoln as the Early Learning Center. As suspected, the travel time and distance is within the parameters. I think the reasons why we didn't include it are that it makes the imbalance of enrollment between schools worse and it doesn't smooth out the boundaries along the major thoroughfares. Additionally, we talked about Roosevelt and Grant being the #1 and #2 options.

LKWD_000199

Repurposing Lincoln does move the least amount of students as the Grant boundaries don't change. Although that could be seen as a negative--every school but Grant changes boundaries. Sometimes it is good to share the pain.

Here's the breakdown.

Factor	Scenario 6 Repurpose Lincoln
Overall Capacity	2,562
Student Enrollment	1,784
Highest Operating Capacity	Grant 89%
Lowest Operating Capacity	Hayes 53%
Maximum Walk Time	26.5 minutes
Maximum Walk Distance	1.38 miles
# of Students Moved	412

My suggestion is that we include this option and remove Scenario 1 - Repurpose Roosevelt, which exceeds the 1.5 mile and 30 minute walk parameters.

We are still working on keeping all schools open scenario. We came up with one that moved the least amount of students and moved everyone to the closest school, but it took the operating capacity of Horace Mann down to less than 44 percent.

What do you think about setting an operating capacity minimum as another parameter?

Thanks,

Tracy



FutureThink

Tracy V. Healy, President

614-264-2638

www.futurethinkinc.com

She/Her

On Mon, Aug 19, 2024 at 2:31 PM Tracy Healy <thealy@futurethinkinc.com> wrote:

Oh great! Thanks so much!

I'll put together a quick PowerPoint reflecting the executive summary for tonight's meeting.



FutureThink

LKWD_000153

Tracy V. Healy, President
614-264-2638
www.futurethinkinc.com
She/Her

On Mon, Aug 19, 2024 at 1:49 PM Kent Zeman <kent.zeman@lakewoodcityschools.org> wrote:
Looks perfect.

Thank you.

Kent R. Zeman, CFO/Treasurer

Lakewood City School District

13701 Lake Avenue

Lakewood, OH 44107

Phone – (216) 529-4096

Email: kent.zeman@lakewoodcityschools.org

Website: www.lakewoodcityschools.org

August 23, 2024, just prior to the first ETF meeting on August 28, 2024, Superintendent Niedzwiecki sends a weekly memo to the entire school board, wherein she reports on FutureThink's rationale for not including a Lincoln stand-alone closure scenario. And then states that a Lincoln closure scenario will be added nonetheless.

5. **Future Think Update.** From Tracey Healy - "As suspected, the travel time and distance of Lincoln is within the parameters. I think the reasons why we didn't include it are that it makes the imbalance of enrollment between schools worse and it doesn't smooth out the boundaries along the major thoroughfares." With that said, Lincoln will be added as one of the scenarios.

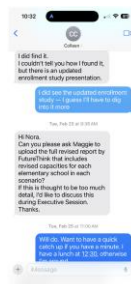
Exhibit D

See for example:

LKWD_004115 – February 7, 2025 weekly memo from Superintendent Niedzwiecki to the school board, including a presentation from the City seeking to relocate city hall to the old Grant properties, stating: **“We can discuss the logistics at our next executive meeting.”**

4. **City Hall Future Endeavor.** Kent and I met with John Storey on Thursday. He wanted to share the future building/move expansion the City is seeking to accomplish in the next year. I have attached the slides presented to City Counsel last Monday. We can discuss the logistics at our next executive meeting.

LKWD_0000020 – February 25, 2025 text messages from Colleen Clark-Sutton to Nora Katzenberger asking “Can you please ask Maggie to upload the full revised report by Future think that includes revised capacities for each elementary school in each scenario? If this is thought to be too much detail, I’d like to discuss this during Executive Session.”



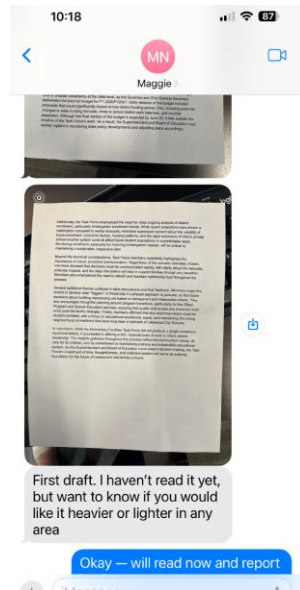
LKWD_005253 – February 28, 2025 email from Colleen Clark-Sutton to Superintendent Niedzwiecki “Can you please share the capacities and walking maps with student dots for the other six scenarios? **At Tuesday's meeting, you thought you might have these.**”

LKWD_005067 – February 28, 2025 weekly memo from Superintendent Niedzwiecki to the school board stating that executive session is needed for the Board meeting and including the FutureThink enrollment study.

2. **Executive Session.** There is a need for an Executive Session before the Board meeting. The Executive Session will start at 5:45 p.m. in Harrison’s Main Office Conference Room. We will order dinner from Panera and have it available by 5:30 p.m. Please send your Panera order to Helen by Noon on Tuesday. panerabread.com/en-us/home.html
4. **Future Think Final Report.** Attached please see the Final Report provided by Future Think regarding the Enrollment Projection Update.

Exhibit E

See LKWD_000001 – Text messages from Superintendent Niedzwiecki to school board leadership, sending pictures of relevant portions of the task force report recommendations, asking “want to know if you would like it heavier or lighter in any area” to which Nora Katzenberger immediately responds “Okay – will read now and report [...]”



See also LKWD_000042 – Text messages from Superintendent Niedzwiecki to entire school board, noting that “You will already have a copy of the report prior to you leaving.”

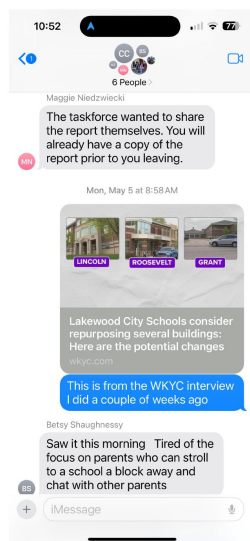


Exhibit F

LKWD_002382 – Auditor’s letter identifies “uncorrected misstatements” in the financials that it deems “immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate” to the district’s financial statements.

Corrected and Uncorrected Misstatements

Professional standards require us to accumulate all known and likely misstatements identified during the audit, other than those that are clearly trivial, and communicate them to the appropriate level of management. The attached schedule summarizes uncorrected misstatements of the financial statements. Management has determined that their effects are immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate, to the financial statements taken as a whole. The uncorrected misstatements or the matters underlying them could potentially cause future period financial statements to be materially misstated, even though, in our judgment, such uncorrected misstatements are immaterial to the financial statements under audit.

2. **Total Expenditures Exceed Final Appropriations ***

During our review of budgetary procedures, we noted that the following funds had total expenditures that exceeded final appropriations, which is contrary to Ohio Revised Code Section 5705.41(B):

	Final Appropriations	Actual Expenditures	Difference
General Fund	\$ 84,496,145	\$ 86,894,392	\$ (2,398,247)
Title I School Improvement A Fund	40,000	112,265	(72,265)
Drug Free School Grant Fund	225,000	267,579	(42,579)
Miscellaneous Federal Grant Fund	1,000,000	1,000,787	(787)

Recommendation

We recommend that the District exercise due care to ensure total expenditures do not exceed final appropriations. This will assist the District in avoiding negative fund balances and also ensure the District is in compliance with Ohio Revised Code Section 5705.41(B).

3. **Financial Reporting**

Financial reporting is the responsibility of the District and is essential to ensure the information provided to the readers of the financial statements is complete and accurate. Lack of controls over financial reporting can result in errors and irregularities that may go undetected and decrease the reliability of financial data at year end.

The following errors/misstatements were not material and did not require adjustments or reclassification to the financial statements:

- Governmental activities' expenses and Long-Term Liabilities Due in Greater than One Year were understated by \$1,140,938.
- Governmental activities' Long-Term Liabilities Due in Greater than One Year and Operation of Non-Instructional Expenses were overstated by \$119,834.

Recommendation

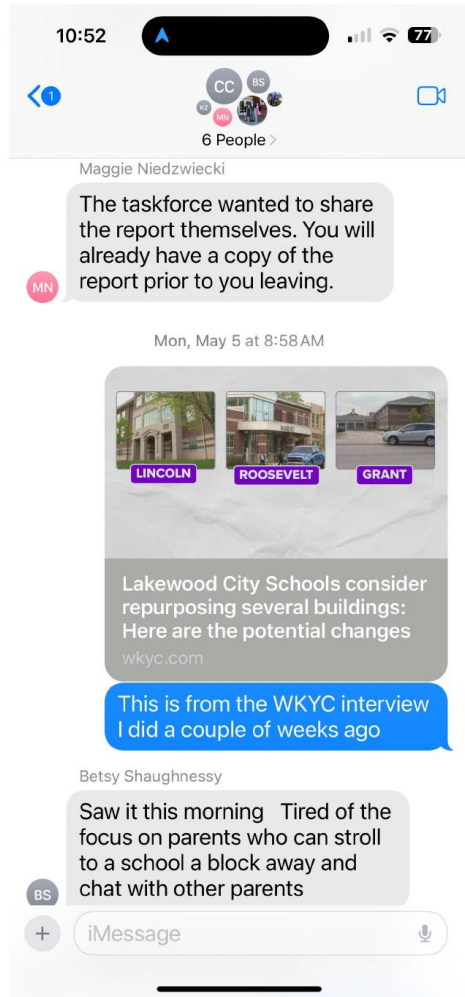
We recommend that the District implement controls and procedures related to financial reporting that enables management to identify, prevent, detect, and correct potential misstatements in the financial statements and notes.

Uncorrected Misstatements

	<u>Debit</u>	<u>Credit</u>
<i>Governmental Activities</i>		
Regular Instruction	940,594	
Other Instruction	6,226	
Support Services – Pupil	33,273	
Support Service – Instructional Staff	61,172	
Support Services – Board of Education	19,663	
Support Services – Fiscal	7,074	
Food Service	46,975	
Shared Services	17,262	
Extracurricular Activities	8,699	
Long-Term Liabilities Due in Greater than one Year		1,140,938
<To correct compensated absences long-term liability balances>		
Long-Term Liabilities Due in Greater than one Year	119,834	
Operation of Non-Instructional Services		119,834
<To correct compensated absences long-term liability balances>		

Exhibit G

See LKWD_000042:



Btw, when I wondered whether the Preserve-type people were concerned when the 3 other elementary schools were poised to close years ago, I didn't really mean the very same people (who wouldn't have had kids in school then). I just believe the issue of closing schools is really only of concern to the schools possibly affected, not to the whole school community (and certainly not to the larger non-school community.) For example, I've lived in the Lincoln area during the previous closings and I don't recall any opposition. I believe that's because Lincoln wasn't threatened then.

Exhibit H

From: Maggie Niedzwiecki <maggie.niedzwiecki@lakewoodcityschools.org>
Sent: Tuesday, December 17, 2024 3:13 PM
To: Colleen Clark-Sutton
Cc: Lisa Dopman; Nora Katzenberger; Betsy Shaughnessy; Michael Callahan; Kent Zeman
Subject: Re: [For Review] Community Survey & Postcard Draft

Thank you everyone. I have sent your comments and thoughts to IMPACT. Kent and I will be meeting with them on Thursday.

Maggie

On Mon, Dec 16, 2024 at 4:42 PM Colleen Clark-Sutton <colleen.clark-sutton@lakewoodcityschools.org> wrote:

Hi All,

I concur with everything Nora and Lisa have offered as feedback so far.

Here are some additional thoughts:

I believe the statistic is something like only 15-16% of all Lakewood households have school-aged children in our public schools. Our levy (and other topics) messaging needs to reach beyond the engaged elementary parents who attended the Community Conversations. (I realize other people listened too.) Their ability to express their love for their individual elementary school communities can not be a major factor in making our decision.

Demographics - I recognize the desire to keep the survey short. I highly recommend we collect some basic demographic data (m/f/o, age, rent/own, # of years in Lakewood...) If possible, getting some geographic information might be helpful for us to be sure we have a broad reach across the district (N/S or E/W or NW, NE, SE, SW quadrants). We need to know who we are missing in our first request for input.

Question - Are You a Parent?

Since the survey was coming from the School District, I almost answered NO. Tom (my husband) said he had the same thought.

If a person says they do not have children, they are directed to the last question. This assumes they will never have children. Hopefully, some of our younger, recent homeowners and renters will want to stay here to raise their children, so getting their input about pre-school could be helpful.

Priority rankings - can we talk about the pros and cons of designing the rankings so they have to choose which of these items is most important and least important? We have at least one Task Force member who might rank all of these items as very important (except for #4 - maximizing economic operating efficiency as a school district).

See LKWD_000370 – Email from Colleen Clark-Sutton to Superintendent Niedzwiecki on September 6, 2024, stating that “Are you and the Board (including me) open to this Task Force recommending a 10-year plan of action, so we don’t have to do this again, if our population continues to decline? I think this can broaden people’s understanding of demographic shifts. Also, it ‘might’ lessen the burden on all of us about the closing of one (1) school, if one (1) school is part of a larger plan.”

On Fri, Sep 6, 2024 at 8:12 AM Colleen Clark-Sutton <colleen.clark-sutton@lakewoodcityschools.org> wrote:
Dear Maggie,

Good morning. I have a couple of thoughts to share with you based on some of the ideas posed in the GoogleDoc:

A. One person’s request for building floor plans made me wonder if it’s possible to move the meetings around to different buildings?

If building principals are willing to come at 6:00, Task Force members could come at 6:00 and get a tour of the current use of space and be ready for the scheduled 6:30 work session.

Grant could be a first site, since it appears to be a common factor in most scenarios. With three (3) more meetings, we could meet at G /R /L

Or, Emerson or Horace Mann could be meeting sites, as the larger buildings that may be able to ‘absorb’ more students.

B. Should the District pay for a marketing study about the community’s Pre-K needs, or do we already have one)? Are we open to offering toddler care, or is that a whole other set of licenses and pay scales?

C. This is an additional thought (that we may have briefly discussed in the past): Are you and the Board (including me) open to this Task Force recommending a 10-year plan of action, so we don’t have to do this again, if our population continues to decline? I think this can broaden people’s understanding of demographic shifts. Also, it ‘might’ lessen the burden on all of us about the closing of one (1) school, if one (1) school is part of a larger plan.

I’m not expecting a detailed response to me
These are just musings to share. I’m reading the GoogleDoc comments and questions, but I will not be authoring anything in that document.

Take care,
Colleen

See LKWD_004262 – FutureThink explaining to Maggie that the 2024/2025 “updated” enrollment study is different from the 2022 enrollment study that underpinned all of the ETF work, because that study was done based on “the numbers provided for insurance purposes.”

From: Tracy Healy <thealy@futurethinkinc.com>
Sent time: 2025/02/18 03:03:43 PM
To: Maggie Niedzwiecki <maggie.niedzwiecki@lakewoodcityschools.org>
Cc: Kent Zeman <kent.zeman@lakewoodcityschools.org>
Subject: Re: Classroom Counts
Attachments: 2022_capacity.pdf pres_lakewood_250219_tvhl.pptx

Hi Maggie & Kent,

Yes, I am sure that will come up. So for the 2022 study, we used the numbers provided for insurance purposes. See attached email. Is there a better way to describe these?

Also attached is the presentation. Please let me know if you have any questions or revisions.
Thanks so much,
Tracy